

What Does It Mean to Age Successfully?

If we reach old age having done everything in our control to remain healthy, yet our genes or bad luck have us dealing with disability or chronic illness, are we disqualified as being “successful agers”?

Experts say that older adults who are meeting health challenges with resilience and resourcefulness and finding ways to live life on their own terms are also aging successfully.

How can we improve our attitude about our own aging? What advice can we give to loved ones who might be having a hard time aging? Here are a few tips:

- Don't compare yourself to others. We are all unique. We should take every opportunity to eat a healthy diet, exercise, and get regular health care. Most likely, we will eventually deal with age-related health conditions. It's not a contest. Doing the best we can is what counts.
- Don't chalk everything up to “it's because I am old.” Studies show seniors with this attitude are less likely to seek medical help for troubling symptoms, such as aches and pains, memory changes, vision problems, or depression. They are less likely to be proactive in protecting their health. They assume that nothing can be done, or fear that the medical provider will dismiss their complaints. Certain health conditions are more common with age, but taking steps to manage these conditions is empowering.
- Question “anti-aging” products. This multibillion-dollar industry targets seniors who want to seem younger. Many products and procedures they offer are not very effective.
- Don't apologize for needing help. If we live long enough, almost all of us will need some assistance to remain independent and safe. If you access public services, don't be embarrassed – you earned it! If

you've moved to an environment where you can receive care, or if you are aging in place at home and use services to preserve your independence, be proud! Needing help is nothing to be ashamed of. Not seeking help when you need it is the real problem.

Source: IlluminAge Age Wise

